



KENTUCKY

General News

February 2009

Attorney General Conway Tours Storm Ravaged Western Kentucky

With thousands of Kentuckians still without power, Attorney General Jack Conway toured several Western Kentucky communities hit hard by January's ice storm. During his February 9 visit to Grayson, Hopkins and McCracken Counties, General Conway shared information about price-gouging prevention and cautioned local residents and officials about suspicious, fly-by-night contractors, or "storm chasers."

"This has been such a trying time for so many Kentucky families. I wanted to ensure that storm victims weren't victimized a second time by 'storm chasers' and excessive prices for necessary items like gas, kerosene, generators and hotel rooms," General Conway said.

The Office of the Attorney General has received more than 550 complaints of possible price-gouging related to the ice storm. Nearly 300 of those complaints involve gas prices and hotel room rates.

During his visit, General Conway praised local officials for their efforts in the wake of the storm. He was also impressed by the resilience of local residents.

"I was struck once again by the compassion of Kentuckians in the wake of this storm. Friends, neighbors and even complete strangers were helping one another."

During his visit, General Conway also gathered information about how utility companies had responded to what has become Kentucky's worst natural disaster in history. Kentucky Public Service Commission Executive Director Jeff Derouen assured General Conway during a meeting in Frankfort that the PSC will address several issues in an effort to reduce the amount of time customers would be without power in the wake of future storms.

View photos from Attorney General Conway's visit — <http://tinyurl.com/byzmua>

Top Ice Storm Complaints

As of February 26, the Office of the Attorney General has received 554 complaints. The top complaints are related to:

- ▶ Gasoline sales — 195
- ▶ Hotels — 90
- ▶ Generator sales — 75
- ▶ Kerosene sales — 59
- ▶ Cable Service — 33
- ▶ Electrical Service — 25



Kentucky Attorney General
Jack Conway



Attorney General Conway & Representative Bell Promote Cybersafety Legislation



Attorney General Conway and State Representative Johnny Bell say their expanded cybercrimes legislation will not only bring Kentucky laws up to date with changes in technology, but will better protect Kentucky children from Internet predators.

"I've listened to law enforcement officers and parents in every corner of the Commonwealth and this is legislation we desperately need to help keep Kentucky families safe from online predators and criminals," General Conway said.

House Bill 315, which has 21 cosponsors, prohibits registered sex offenders from using social-networking websites that are frequented by minors, like Facebook and MySpace. It would also allow Kentucky prosecutors to criminally charge sex offenders removed from the sites. The cybercrimes legislation would amend Kentucky's stalking statute to include cyberstalking and would create a searchable database of registered sex offender email addresses and online identifiers.

"In essence, this bill will give police officers and other law enforcement the tools they need to protect our children from online sexual predators. This is a bipartisan bill that will help protect our children into the future," Rep. Bell said during testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, which unanimously approved the measure.

The legislation also creates the crime of "phishing," which is when someone tries to obtain personal identifying information using a web page, electronic devices or emails.

For more information — <http://tinyurl.com/cqgg7f>



A Father's Plea

Mark Neblett has learned firsthand that parents often have a false sense of the security when it comes to their children and the Internet. In the summer of 2006, Neblett's 17-year-old daughter, Rachael, began receiving anonymous, threatening emails on her MySpace account.



"I thought it was like when I was a kid, you get over the bullying. It's very different today, and I found out the hard way that being 'old school' can be very dangerous," cautioned Neblett.

Neblett's daughter was a bubbly, confident teenager who planned to attend college in Florida. But her personality began to change after the threatening emails, which contained details of her movements both during and after school. After Rachael finally confided in her older sister, her parents learned that Rachael had been the victim of cyberbullying.

"When this started happening, she was terrified," recalled Neblett. The bubbly teen no longer wanted to go to school or out with her friends. Shortly after receiving an email threatening to put her "in the morgue," Rachael took her own life.

"My heart will never mend because of what has happened," said Neblett. Mark and Donna Neblett believe cyberstalking is to blame for their daughter's death but no charges were ever filed in the case.

Since Rachael's death, Mark Neblett has worked tirelessly to bring the issue to the forefront. He has also worked closely with General Conway and Rep. Bell in promoting cybercrime legislation in Kentucky.

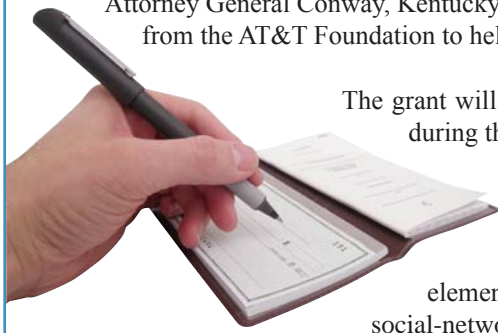


"I am proud of the work General Conway has done on this issue. He has a real 'fire in his belly' about strengthening our laws and protecting Kentucky children from online predators," added Neblett. "We need this for our kids."

Video clips from Neblett, Attorney General Conway and Rep. Bell — <http://tinyurl.com/bdergb>

AT&T Foundation Grant to Help Fund Cybersafety Initiatives in Kentucky

Attorney General Conway, Kentucky Child Now and the Kentucky Department of Education are pleased to announce a \$77,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation to help fund cybersafety initiatives in Kentucky.



The grant will fund two regional development workshops for parents and teachers and 30 student assemblies during the 2009 calendar year. The goal of the workshops is to help train teachers and adults in Kentucky communities about Internet safety so they can help educate others about the dangers that exist online. The workshops will be held in Bowling Green and Northern Kentucky.

“These regional workshops will help us reach our target audience – parents and teachers of elementary, middle and high school students,” General Conway said. “As more and more children utilize social-networking sites, we must give parents and educators the tools they need to protect Kentucky kids in the ‘real world’ and the virtual world.”

The Office of the Attorney General, Kentucky Child Now and the Department of Education formed a partnership in the fall of 2008 to expand statewide cybersafety education efforts and teach adults to be online models, mentors and monitors. The groups agreed to coordinate their resources to reach more Kentuckians.

AG Conway Applauds Restoration of Crime and Drug Enforcement Funds

At the urging of Attorney General Conway and attorneys general from across the country, Congress has restored federal funding for vital crime and drug enforcement efforts. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed on February 17 by President Obama, included \$4 billion for state and local law enforcement. Of that, \$2 billion will go to the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne/JAG) program, which had seen its funding cut by 67% from last year.

“The drastic cuts to the Byrne/JAG funds have had a devastating effect on drug task force operations across the Commonwealth. I am hopeful that the restoration of these funds will help those task forces and will assist my office with our important initiatives in combating prescription drug abuse in Kentucky,” General Conway said.

General Conway’s office is currently in the formative stages of creating Kentucky’s first Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force. According to Congressman John Yarmuth’s office, \$23.7 million of the Byrne/JAG funds will be given to Kentucky over a two-year period.

“I would like to thank Congressman Yarmuth for his commitment to this important issue and to working with congressional leadership to ensure that the President’s stimulus package included funding for local drug task forces and community crime prevention and substance abuse programs.”

For more information — <http://tinyurl.com/cxlazv>



Letcher County Coroner Resigns in “Doctor Shopping” Case



Attorney General Conway and his Office of Special Prosecutions announced that Letcher County Coroner John Cornett entered a guilty plea on February 13 to seven counts of unlawfully obtaining a prescription for a controlled substance by fraud, also known as “Doctor Shopping.” The coroner was required to resign from his elected position as part of a plea agreement.

Cornett’s wife, Andrea, a former nurse at Whitesburg Appalachian Regional Hospital, also pled guilty to four counts of theft of a controlled substance. The Cornetts were indicted in November 2008 following an investigation by both the Kentucky State Police and Office of the Attorney General’s Department of Criminal Investigations. The couple has been sentenced to pre-trial diversion for a period of three years and both will undergo drug/alcohol assessment and possible drug treatment.

For more information — <http://tinyurl.com/btpgqh>